

Raptor Nuptials ♦ Weddings: Caught on Tape ♦ Va Va Vie

EUGENE WEEKLY SPECIAL ISSUE

Weddings

2014



LESLIE STONELAKE MODELS
A DRESS SHE MADE
AND LOCKS STYLED
BY DAWN BABY SALON

HAIR BY DAWN BABY • MAKEUP BY AMELIA HART • PHOTO BY TRASK BEDORTHA

Vintage Hairstyles



THE OAK GROVE DOUBLE TREE IS ONE OF FOUR CEREMONY SITES AT MOUNT PISGAH

Waste-Free Weddings

MOUNT PISGAH IS A LOCAL LEADER IN SUSTAINABLE WEDDING PRACTICES *By Vanessa Salvia*

Despite the cold and rain that enrobes Eugene for many months of the year, outdoor weddings are growing in popularity here. And there's one venue that is more popular than nearly all others – Mount Pisgah Arboretum.

Peg Douthit-Jackson, the arboretum's education and special events coordinator, says they have been "swamped" with interest in recent years and that it consistently fills its wedding schedule. Part of that growing interest is the arboretum's response to the desire for more sustainable weddings.

"I've been here six years and what we see is a lot of couples doing the same kinds of things," she says. "The same kinds of lighting, the same decorations. I said, 'Wow, they're all bringing in the same things. How can I facilitate more sharing?'" Her response was to encourage couples that are getting married on the same weekend to share what they can. If one person is using white lights and paper lanterns, then they can remain in place for the next couple, and each couple doesn't have to buy full sets of each item. She also noticed couples putting out their own signage directing guests to the site. Now, the venue provides these signs.

"The feedback to these changes has been tremendous," Douthit-Jackson says. "The brides have been really grateful and thankful that they're not all going to have to go out and buy the same things."

In late January, Douthit-Jackson is planning on hosting a get-together for all couples who are scheduled to be married in 2014. "They can get together and talk about their weddings; they can share ideas and ways to reduce buying lots of things," she notes.

Last year 65 couples tied the knot at the outdoor venue. One of those couples was Debra Grosella and Adam Jacques, who got married in the garden terrace right outside the 3,000-square-foot White Oak Pavilion. Grosella had worked in the dessert catering business and had helped set up numerous weddings at

the venue, so her decision was easy. "I just knew that Mount Pisgah was the place. Mount Pisgah chose me," Grosella says. "I wanted to get married outside and it was the perfect place."

Grosella and Jacques wanted to be as creative and resourceful as possible. They used natural decorative items such as moss-covered branches and hand-made tissue paper flowers, made by friends at the bridal shower. They purchased their black tablecloths because buying the fabric was cheaper than renting, and now they plan to donate the tablecloths to Mount Pisgah's sustainability program so that other couples can use them in the future.

Each festival and event that is held at Mount Pisgah uses 100 percent compostable supplies. "We recycle every single thing," Douthit-Jackson says. "We reclaim it, we put it in piles and the compost we put in the native plant beds," she says. "It goes back into the ground. It's a nice circle." There is also a sense of sustainability for the community: Because Mount Pisgah is a nonprofit, it donates 100 percent of the wedding rental fee (\$2,500) to the onsite children's education program.

"We were able to have a waste-free wedding and they made that easy for us," Grosella says. "Everything was composted and recycled and they took care of all that."

Being married outside had other perks for the couple. One of Grosella's guests told her that as the wedding party was taking their places, birds flew in and perched on the branches of the trees surrounding the terrace. "I didn't notice it because I was too nervous about getting married, but it gave me chills when my friend told me that it was almost Cinderella-like," she recalls. "So I tell people about getting married at Mount Pisgah that you don't get just your people guests, but all the wildlife will bless their ceremony in all of their special ways too."

For more info, visit mountpisgaharboretum.com/weddings-and-rentals.

THE WEDDING (RE)CYCLE

Want to try and recoup some cash by selling your wedding supplies (or nab some cheap supplies, and even a tux, for your own wedding)? Craigslist works, but now there's a more targeted approach.

Sites such as Ruffled Blog (ruffledblog.com), which has a section called "Recycle Your Wedding," allows users to sign up to buy and sell gently used wedding items. They charge no commission or listing fees.

Recently, items such as candleholders, a birdcage and a "large assortment of cloth doilies" for \$50 were listed as available. Listings span the United States as well as the world.

Most sites, such as Bravo Bride (bravo-bride.com), list dresses and gowns along with accessories. Tradesy allows users to swap clothing, shoes and handbags of the non-wedding sort, but also has a section specific for wedding gowns, groomsware and decor (tradesy.com/weddings).

It may be hard to find a buyer for your unused cocktail napkins if they are embossed with "Bruce and Bob Forever," but your clean, white tablecloths, linen napkins and unlit candles will be much sought after by other frugal couples. Choosing wedding items that hold their resale value could help you fund that romantic honeymoon you've always wanted. — *Vanessa Salvia*

Homegrown Gowns

LOCAL DESIGNER RENNE PHILLIPS MAKES COUTURE WEDDING DRESSES ACCESSIBLE *By Alex Notman*



(ABOVE)
PHILLIPS
ALTERED
A DAVID'S
BRIDAL GOWN
TO HAVE A
TEAR-AWAY
SKIRT

(BELOW) THE
BEFORE AND
AFTER OF A
HANDBEADED
GOWN BY
PHILLIPS



Renne Phillips sits perched on a stool in the Redoux Parlour's workspace surrounded by scissors, paper patterns and sketches. Behind her, a dress form is mocked up with lace – the beginning of a gown she'll complete for a summer wedding. She pulls out the garment's sketch; sweeping lines resembling rose petals flow together creating a voluminous skirt, which is sprinkled with dots representing intricate beadwork.

"It's inspired by a Christian Dior dress," she says. Phillips will spend 100-plus hours to finish the frothy, twinkling concoction, which includes consultations with the bride, finding fabric, patternmaking, fittings, alterations and, of course, sewing thousands of beads on by hand.

In the new millennium, the strapless white mermaid-silhouette dress has become *de rigueur* and ubiquitous for brides. But Phillips offers something different, a custom gown that no other person in the world will own for a price that is competitive with the average off-the-rack wedding gown.

A longtime lover of Parisian couture and runway fashion, the local designer started making custom gowns during high school in San Francisco. Her grandmother, who Phillips describes as a San Francisco "it" girl during the '60s, was her fashion icon, letting her play dress-up as a child with a closetful of fur coats, hats and "original Karl Lagerfelds." After completing school at San Francisco's Fashion Institute of Design and Merchandising, Phillips moved to Eugene and started focusing on couture full-time with her line Va Va Vie. In 2012, she showed her first full line of gowns at Eugene Fashion Week. She has been working with brides ever since.

"I enjoy being part of the event – helping bring their vision to life," says Phillips of working with brides. "People always say working with brides is tough, but I'm so meticulous, I get it."



PHOTO BY TRASK BEDORTHA

So why should a bride go custom? Phillips ticks off the pros of a custom gown: A bride can get exactly what she wants; it's the most bang for buck; the fit is tailored to each individual body; it's an intimate experience from beginning to end; and it's local. Although Phillips says her wedding gowns typically start at \$1,000, she will work with any budget.

"It's for brides that want something outside the box," she says. "If you're a creative person, you want a creative garment." Phillips points to a picture of one of her clients in which the bride is wearing a white scalloped gown with a beaded emerald peacock. She will also take an off-the-rack dress and customize it, like she did for one client who wanted her David's Bridal gown's skirt to tear away and detach, revealing a mini skirt, for a special swing dance choreographed with the groom. Phillips does bridesmaid dresses and special event gowns too. She also specializes in intimates with her signature beading.

"It's real-life couture," Phillips says. "It's so much more accessible than a bride would think."

For more info about Renne Phillips' designs, visit vavavie.com.

PHOTOS COURTESY OF VA VA VIE



Timeless Tresses

VINTAGE HAIRSTYLES ARE INCREASINGLY POPULAR FOR BRIDES AND GROOMS *By Vanessa Salvia* HAIR BY DAWN BABY MAKEUP BY AMELIA HART

PHOTOS BY TRASK BEDORTHA

At Dawn Baby Salon in Eugene, the past comes back to glamorous life for brides and grooms seeking vintage style. Stylist Dawn Baby specializes in vintage hair; more couples are turning to hairstyles from the 1920s through the 1960s.

1. Leslie Stonelake is the epitome of 1950s style wearing a dress she made and with her hair in a simple, glamorous short style.
2. Stylist Amelia Hart sets Sara Pesta's hair in

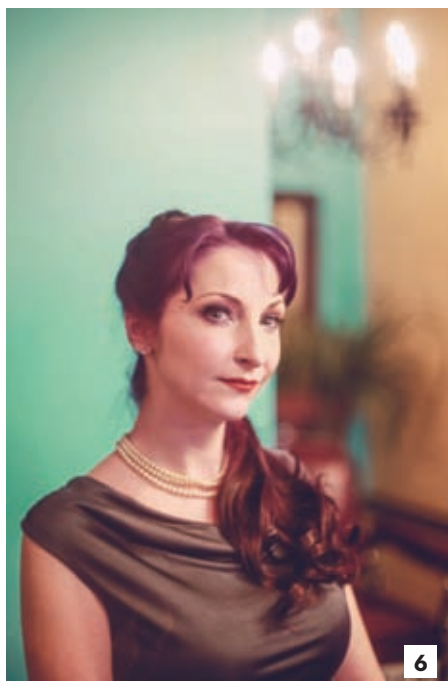
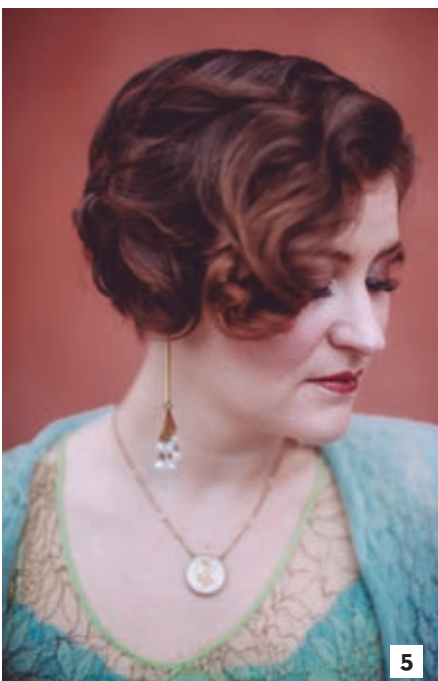
1940s victory rolls. Dawn Baby recommends brides seek out a stylist as soon as they have decided on a dress. "You always want to have a dress rehearsal with your stylist to see if your styles merge," she says.

3. Blake Taylor gets a clean shave and a pompadour. Guys should make their grooming appointment for the day before the event. Dawn Baby provides straight razor shaves to make sure everything is "baby's-butt smooth with not a hair out of place."

4. Starr Amrit's hair is a combination of braids and victory rolls. Vintage makeup uses bold lines and strong colors. "It's a timeless look," Hart says. "Wearing red lipstick just makes you feel good, and curls are flattering to everyone."

5. Most women's hairstyles from the 1920s, such as Claire Flint Last's look, were short with tight curls. "There are styles that can be achieved from all eras for both short and long hair," Dawn Baby says.

6. Sara Pesta's purple hair is a modified 1940s style. Plan to get your hair done the day of your special event — these are not styles that can be done ahead of time.
7. Claire Flint Last gets the finishing touches on her *Great Gatsby*-era hair. "Your wedding is your fantasy of how you want to look your best, so you try to find someone that can help you do it," Dawn Baby says.



PHOTOS BY TODD COOPER

For Every Couple, A Story

HIGH-END PRODUCTION MEETS TRADITIONAL STORYTELLING AT MOETIC WEDDING FILMS *By William Kennedy*

“Everywhere we travel we tell people there’s no better place to get married than Oregon,” says Ryan Welch, co-founder of Moetic Wedding Films, a high-end wedding film production company with offices in Eugene and McMinnville, Ore. “The problem is,” Welch continues, to take advantage of Oregon’s natural beauty “you’ve only got three months. We’re not going to film a wedding here in the Northwest until June.”

Welch and his business partner Ryan Rossman aren’t interested in making just any wedding video. They want to make wedding films. And to do so, they have to reach markets like Sonoma, Santa Barbara and Phoenix — places where people not only get married year-round, but also can afford an expensive memento of the special day.

Welch says he and Rossman decided early on, “If we’re going to make this work, we’re going to have to price ourselves out of the [Lane County] market and travel. Our goal is to try and fill our Oregon summers here,” Welch continues. “The challenge is to figure out how to get down to California because they’re getting married in November.”

Rossman worked for a time in Brooklyn. Contacts in the New York area have led to Moetic shooting in places like St. Lucia, the Bahamas and Cabo San Lucas. The company also finds work online through Google search engine optimization and posting to wedding blogs like *Style Me Pretty* (stylemepretty.com).

“People who are hiring us don’t care where we’re from,” Welch says. “They don’t care about the cost. They’ve got good income coming in and they just want to throw a sweet party for all their friends. We

give them a wedding film, five to seven minutes, and a 90-minute documentary film,” he continues. “What we hear a lot is that we’re able to capture their story in a way that makes it come to life.”

Welch says shooting weddings can be a grind — if

you’ve seen one wedding you’ve seen them all — particularly in the age of social networking sites like Pinterest. But Welch thinks focusing on the couple and their story helps the process stay fresh for him.

“The couple’s unique,” Welch says. “When you realize there’s a couple that loves each other, then you have a story. And if we can figure out a way to tell that couple’s story then every wedding we do will be unique and different. When people see our films they come away feeling like they know that person. It’s the storytelling that most people find attractive about what we do.”

For more info, visit moeticweddingfilms.com.



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To the Altar? Not so Fast

OREGON HAS A SHADY HISTORY OF OPPOSING **LGBT EQUALITY**

By Shannon Finnell

You think you know a state – and Oregon, with its crunchy granola public-access beaches and the fewest abortion restrictions in the nation, should be known for protecting its gay and lesbian residents as well, right?

Not so much. According to Sasha Buchert, formerly of Basic Rights Oregon and now a staff attorney at the Transgender Law Center, Oregon holds the record as the state with the most anti-gay ballot measures in its history. The Gay and Lesbian Archives of the Pacific Northwest put that number at 35. And Springfield, that sweet little city to Eugene's east, was the first place in the U.S. to put anti-gay language in its city charter back in May 1992.

Springfield's charter amendment, which prohibited

the city from "promoting homosexuality" and banned anti-discrimination policies based on sexual orientation, passed with 55.4 percent of the vote. It was introduced by the Oregon Citizens Alliance, a right-wing Christian organization active in the late '80s and '90s. Other municipalities, including Creswell, Junction City, Cottage Grove, Oakridge and counties such as Linn and Douglas followed suit, but a statewide measure failed in November 1992. The Supreme Court decision *Romer vs. Williams* struck down all of the Oregon municipalities' anti-discrimination legislation.

Oregon holds the record as the state with the most anti-gay ballot measures in its history.

Buchert says that the anti-gay politics of the early '90s, when so many bigoted ballot measures passed, could be especially burdensome to people living away from LGBT support systems of metropolitan areas. "It's really difficult to walk out your door and see signs attacking who you are," she says. "It was a huge challenge for folks at that time living in those areas."

Christine Lundberg, Springfield's mayor since 2011, lived in Springfield during the days of the Oregon Citizens Alliance campaign, but as a busy young mother, Lundberg says she wasn't as politically involved back then. "I remember the controversy," she says. "I was sorry to see [the amendment] passed."

But Lundberg says that supporting equal rights has always seemed in line with Springfield's values, so she's not surprised to hear that a lot of Springfield residents support Oregon United for Marriage's ballot measure for marriage equality in 2014. Lundberg adds that sometimes Springfield is tainted with a reputation that isn't accurate. "We're a much more welcoming community than stereotypes say," she says.

Buchert says that Oregon's record for most of the anti-gay ballot measures probably doesn't set the state apart as some sort of evil pariah. "I think it was the political

work of one organization that tried to use Oregon as a testing ground for the rest of the country to develop this anti-gay rhetoric and prey upon people's fears and misunderstanding of who gay and lesbian people are," she says.

For the city with the nation's first anti-gay language in its charter to have a mayor who supports marriage equality is a sign that times are changing for the better, Buchert says.

Lundberg says it's friendship that shows her that speaking out for basic rights is important: "I have several friends who are gay and in love, and I just look at them and think, 'Why would I stand in their way of being married?'"

AUTHOR MELISSA HART AND HUSBAND JONATHAN
RELEASE A RED-TAILED HAWK AT THEIR NUPTIALS



A Hoot of a Ceremony

LOCAL AUTHOR MELISSA HART REMEMBERS HER WEDDING AT **CASCADES RAPTOR CENTER** *By Melissa Hart*

“Jonathan? Melissa? Meet us on the lawn and close your eyes.”

Grinning staff members at the Cascades Raptor Center led us past our lopsided wedding cake to the grass outside the visitors' center. “We have a gift for you ... *don't peek.*”

For years, we'd volunteered to clean mews, feed

orphaned owls and medicate injured hawks at the nature center and wildlife hospital in Eugene. After Jonathan proposed, we asked to marry at the center.

My mother wrote for a glossy wedding magazine. Reading her articles, I absorbed an abundance of white tulle, three-tiered cakes, snowy linen tablecloths. We rejected these niceties in favor of shivering in the cold

of a March afternoon with Lorax, the great-horned owl, as our ring-bearer and volunteers with other resident birds on their gloves.

“This is the strangest wedding I've ever been to,” my mother-in-law observed from a folding chair perched on damp grass. “I love it.”

Our ceremony lasted five minutes, conducted by a purple-haired minister. At one point, Lorax ripped our rings from the ribbon around her foot and hurled them into the mud. During our first kiss as a married couple, the resident raven called out, “What'cha doing?”

Our guests laughed, a loving response to our world. After an apple cider toast, after pieces of the cake I'd festooned inexpertly with wildflowers, the staff requested our presence on the lawn. I closed my eyes, felt the assistant director slip leather gloves onto my hands. Beside me, Jonathan chuckled.

“You can open your eyes now.”

He stood with a hooded red-tailed hawk in his arms – a bird we'd helped to feed and medicate during its recovery from injury. “It's healed now,” staff said, “ready to release into the wild.”

Jonathan, ever generous, handed me the hawk and loosened its tiny leather hood. I clasped its strong legs in my hands, held it against my chest. “Just toss it into the air,” my new husband coached. “One, two, three!”

The bird flew over our heads and landed in a Doug fir. Our guests applauded. My brother handed out wedding favors – beribboned birdseed balls. A friend toasted us with a splash of cider. “That sure beat watching Jonathan remove Melissa's garter with his teeth.”

Sometimes now, we return to the Cascades Raptor Center and stand on the lawn together. Sometimes a hawk soars high above the trees. Then, we remember the wild fulfillment of our marriage day.

Melissa Hart teaches at the UO School of Journalism and Communication. Lyons Press will publish her memoir – Wildness Within: A Romance, an Adoption, and a Baby Barred Owl – in August 2014.



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